

Central TAG conference

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The Archaeology Group at the University of Birmingham was asked in June 2010 by the TAG national committee to host the 2011 conference after another institution abandoned the project. Organisation was undertaken by staff of the Archaeology Group. Praise cannot be high enough for the hard work and dedication of the members of the staff-led organising committee and student volunteers.

Decisions were taken early to locate conference activity within the University's Edgbaston campus in order to promote the institution and the Archaeology Group to outsiders. The decision was taken to locate sleeping accommodation for attendees elsewhere because the University was unable to offer sufficient rooms at reasonable cost.

The *Central*/TAG conference (so named because of the central position of Birmingham in the country) attracted 400 participants, including from as far afield as the Iberian Peninsula, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Australia, the USA, Canada and Japan. Of these, over 250 were students at other institutions, including overseas. It also provided an opportunity to attend for 70 Birmingham students (UG and PG) who volunteered to undertake various tasks related to the conference organisation. The conference consisted of 33 sessions on a wide range of topics together with a Plenary, the topic of which related to the location of archaeology in Birmingham as part of an interdisciplinary mix. The social programme consisted of a Reception at which the University of Birmingham Vice Chancellor welcomed attendees, and the annual TAG party held in the Birmingham University Guild of Students bar.

Final accounts have still to be prepared but current estimates show a financial surplus. Half of any surplus will of course be passed to the National TAG Committee to assist in the support of future conferences, the remainder retained by the University of Birmingham College of Arts and Law.

Participants from outside Birmingham were full of praise for the location and the organisation of the event, the quality of sessions and presentations, and for the friendliness and efficiency of volunteers and organisers alike. It may be no coincidence that since the conference, we have received requests to transfer to study Archaeology at Birmingham from students at other universities. Birmingham students (from all disciplines represented in the IAA) have also shown a strong interest and commitment to attending future TAG conferences.

